

Application No. 09/634,185
Filed: August 9, 2000
TC Art Unit: 2643
Confirmation No.: 5742

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 8 have been cancelled; claims 2, 9-15, and 19-20 have been amended; and claims 21 - 32 have been added. Claims 2-7 and 9-32 are pending.

It will be observed that claims 11 and 15 have been re-written in independent form. New independent claim 22 is similar to claim 11 except that the choice of wired or wireless connection is made with respect to the user interface rather than with respect to the premises interface. New claims 24-31 are method claims, with independent method claims 24, 30 and 31 generally corresponding to independent apparatus claims 15, 11 and 22 respectively.

In the Office Action, claims 1-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious in view of Shaffer (US 5,991,387) and Gerszberg (US 6,044,403). This rejection is now moot due to the cancellation of claim 1 and the new dependency of claims 2-7 from claim 15.

In the Office Action, claims 8-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious in view of Shaffer, Gerszberg and "official notice" stated in the Office Action. Also, the teachings of Peters (US 5,993,775) appear to be applied against claims reciting both wired and wireless connections, such as

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claims 11 and 22. This rejection is respectfully traversed as it applies to the claims as amended herein.

Claim 15 recites a communications outlet including a housing, user interface circuitry including a link-layer data interface to a user data device, premises interface circuitry, bridging circuitry that establishes communications between the user interface circuitry and the premises circuitry, and a processor that provides high-level services to the user via the data interface. Examples of such services, recited in claims 16-18, include data encryption, user authentication, and diagnostics and status reporting.

Shaffer shows a method of controlling the use of channels at an ISDN terminal. Figure 7 shows a system environment in which a user terminal 230 and a telephone 510 are coupled to an adapter 530, which in turn is connected to a switch 200 via a digital line 210. The adapter 530 is described as providing the functionality shown in Figure 4, which includes monitoring the busy-ness of the ISDN B channels, conditionally forwarding voice calls to voice mail, and conditionally disabling a "do not disturb" indication. As noted in the Office Action, Shaffer does not show user interface circuitry, premises interface circuitry, and bridge circuitry within the adapter 530. Shaffer also does not show the

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providing of high-level services such as encryption, authentication etc. from the adapter 530.

Gerszberg shows a system employing an Intelligent Services Director (ISD) 22 on customer premises. The ISD interfaces with a plurality of customer devices, such as telephones, PCs, videophones, etc., and is coupled to a central office Facilities Management Platform (FMP) 32 via twisted pair cable. The ISD 22 is apparently shared by all the users at a given customer location to gain access to the remote FMP 32 residing at the central office. The ISD 22 effects communications between the myriad customer devices and the FMP 32, and does not appear to provide any higher-level services.

The "official notice" in the Office Action states that it is well known to use encryption for data transmission and to request authentication information for a user. This "official notice" does not state that it is known to provide encryption and authentication from a communications outlet disposed between user devices and premises equipment.

Peters is seen to teach a telephone system employing a personal computer (PC) and a plurality of channels including wireline and wireless channels. Peters is not seen to teach the alternative use of a wired channel and a wireless channel, for

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example by choosing to use the wireless channel if the wired channel is faulty or does not provide adequate bandwidth.

It is respectfully submitted that Shaffer, Gerszberg, and the "official notice" do not render the invention of claim 15 obvious, because these references do not collectively teach or suggest all the elements thereof. Specifically, these references do not teach or suggest a communications outlet disposed between a plurality of user devices and premises equipment that, in addition to providing communications between the user devices and the premises equipment, also provides high-level services to the user via a user data interface. As described above and admitted in the Office Action, neither the adapter 530 of Shaffer nor the ISD 22 of Gerszberg provide high-level services to a user. Additionally, the "official notice" states only that services such as encryption and authentication are known, but fails to teach or suggest providing these or other high-level services from a communications outlet disposed between the user devices and premises equipment. Because the applied references and the "official notice" fail to teach or suggest all the elements of claim 15, claim 15 is not obvious in view of these items under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Independent claims 11 and 22 are directed to the alternative use of wired or wireless connections within the communications

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outlet. In claim 11, a wireless connection is used to communicate with the premises equipment if the obtainable data rate is greater than the data rate that can be obtained by one of the wired connections to the premises equipment. In claim 22, a wireless connection is used to communicate with the user if the wired connection to the user is determined to be faulty.

As described above, Peters is not seen to show such alternative use of wireless and wired connections. Peters shows only the use of both wired and wireless connections in the context of the disclosed telephone system, and does not teach or suggest selecting a wireless connection as an alternative to a wired connection if either a higher data rate can be obtained or if the wired connection is faulty. Because Peters along with Shaffer, Gerszberg, and the "official notice" therefore fail to teach or suggest every element of claims 11 and 22, these claims are not obvious in view of these items under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

The remaining claims incorporate, either directly or indirectly, features like those discussed above with respect to claims 15, 11 and 22, and therefore the foregoing remarks regarding the patentability of claims 15, 11 and 22 in view of the applied references are likewise applicable to the remaining claims.

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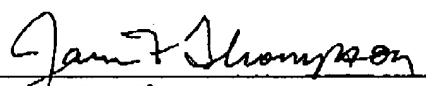
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Based on the foregoing, it is believed that all the claims of this application are presently allowable. Favorable action is respectfully requested. The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned attorney to discuss any matter that would expedite allowance of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

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